United Nations A/C.3/69/SR.30

General Assembly
Sixty-ninth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
19 January 2015

Original: English

Third Committee

Summary record of the 30th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 27 October 2014, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Ms. Nilsson (Vice-Chair) ..... (Sweden)

Contents

Agenda item 68: Promotion and protection of human rights (*continued*)

(b) Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms (*continued*)

(c) Human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives (*continued*)

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be sent as soon as possible, under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, to the Chief of the Documents Control Unit (srcorrections@un.org), and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

14-63368 (E)

Please recycle

In the absence of Ms. Mesquita Borges (Timor-Leste), Ms. Nilsson (Sweden), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 68: Promotion and protection of human rights (*continued*) (A/69/383-S/2014/668)

(b) Human rights question, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms (*continued*) (A/69/97, A/69/99, A/69/121, A/69/214, A/69/259, A/69/261, A/69/263, A/69/265, A/69/266, A/69/268, A/69/269, A/69/272, A/69/273, A/69/274, A/69/275, A/69/276, A/69/277, A/69/286, A/69/287, A/69/288, A/69/293, A/69/294, A/69/295, A/69/297, A/69/299, A/69/302, A/69/333, A/69/366, A/69/335, A/69/336, A/69/365, A/69/397, A/69/402 and A/69/518)

(c) Human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives (*continued*) (A/69/301, A/69/306, A/69/307, A/69/356, A/69/362, A/69/398, A/69/548 and A/69/639; A/C.3/69/2, A/C.3/69/3, A/C.3/69/4 and A/C.3/69/5)

1. **Mr. de Zayas** (Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order), introducing his interim report (A/69/272) in accordance with General Assembly resolution 68/175, said that self-determination was an expression of democracy and its implementation was essential to the establishment of a peaceful international order. Too often the aspiration of peoples to achieve self-determination had been ignored, leading to conflict and death. Self-determination must be more than a promise enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and various human rights covenants: it must be a pledge made in international solidarity. Self-determination should be seen as a conflict-prevention strategy and a guarantee of sustainable peace.

2. It had been affirmed in the aforementioned resolution that a democratic and equitable international order required the realization of the right of all peoples to self-determination, by virtue of which they could freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development; and the right of peoples and nations to permanent sovereignty over their natural wealth and resources. Whereas international lawyers recognized self-determination as a norm of peremptory international law, there was no agreed definition, and some wished to limit its scope. Over the past 50 years there had been many other developments pertaining to the self-determination of peoples, including precedents of restructuring State entities by granting greater regional autonomy, introducing federalism, accepting secession, or voting for unification. The progressive development of international law could not ignore the fact that many new countries and Members of the United Nations owed their existence to a process of self-determination, such as that which had unfolded in the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the wars in the former Yugoslavia, Eritrea, South Sudan, Timor-Leste, the friendly separation of countries such as Czechoslovakia or the democratic unification of Germany.

3. Bearing in mind that the aspiration of peoples to control their destiny was not a thing of the past but very much a current concern, the implementation of their self-determination must be taken seriously and in a timely fashion. Over past decades, too many conflicts had started because of the denial of the legitimate aspiration of peoples to realize their human rights.

4. Logically, it was the responsibility of the United Nations to listen to early warning signs, engage in dialogue and address the grievances of peoples who had specific ethnic, religious and cultural identities and who were denied the right to equal participation in decision-making. In order to facilitate the evaluation of present and future claims for self-determination, his report formulated criteria that should be applied uniformly.

5. He recommended that States take measures to implement common article 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which stipulated the right of all peoples to self-determination. He additionally urged States to report proactively to the Human Rights Council on the enjoyment of self-determination by populations under their jurisdiction, pursuant to the universal periodic review procedure, and to report on self-determination matters to the Human Rights Committee and to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

6. In addition, he asked the General Assembly to consider establishing a special mechanism to monitor the reality of self-determination, in particular the situation of unrepresented peoples and non-self-governing peoples who were currently not considered

under Article 73 of the Charter. The General Assembly should also consider tasking the Human Rights Council with the examination of self-determination issues as a permanent item of its agenda or as part of the universal periodic review procedure, in particular from the functional perspective of self-determination as a tool to promote international peace and security. Moreover, the General Assembly could refer legal questions to the International Court of Justice for advisory opinions. The right to self-determination had not been extinguished and must be implemented. The international community must work with continuously developing human rights jurisprudence, and could not tell those who hungered for democracy and participation that the issue was closed, or that the General Assembly was not the proper venue.

7. He encouraged the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly to allocate more resources to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. That issue must not be dodged with lame references to the financial crisis. Instead, the moral crisis and crisis of priorities should be faced. In 2013, global military spending had reached $1.75 trillion, which showed that money was available. Disarmament and a reorienting of resources towards the implementation of human rights were urgently needed. An investment in the Office was an investment for both current and future generations.

8. He would welcome any opportunities to hold bilateral discussions with delegations to learn what they considered to be the priority issues covered by his mandate. He would also continue to work closely with other special procedures mandate holders in order to avoid duplication and overlapping.

9. **Mr. de Jesús Pérez** (Cuba) said that he was interested to hear how the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order, as well as a new international economic order, could help with the realization of the post-2015 development agenda. In addition, he asked the Independent Expert how he would work to promote a better relationship between the law and the self-determination of peoples, the right to development, sovereignty over natural resources and the right to peace.

10. **Mr. de Zayas** (Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order) said that sustainable development goals and the post-2015 development agenda were indeed germane to the work of his mandate, but that the work of the Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity also addressed such issues and had informed his report. The issues of the right to self-determination, sovereignty over natural resources and the right to peace had all been referred to in the resolutions that had established and extended his mandate. The added value of the right to peace was an essential precondition for the enjoyment of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. As all human rights were interrelated and interdependent, all of those issues would be taken into account in future reports. It was regrettable that self-determination was no longer a permanent item on the agenda of the Human Rights Committee, and the General Assembly should consider drafting a resolution that would give greater prominence to the issue of self-determination in the work of the Human Rights Council.

11. Self-determination was not an issue of the past, but rather an acutely current issue, which should be understood from the perspective of conflict prevention. If claims to self-determination were addressed in a timely fashion, much conflict would be avoided in the years to come. His report contained a number of pertinent recommendations, including that States should recognize and support indigenous peoples' legal systems and parliaments by granting them special status so that they could authentically represent their communities, both nationally and internationally. In addition, States could and should surpass the minimum requirement demanded by human rights treaties, implementing soft laws such as the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. In the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations, States should not shun good faith pledges and commitments merely because the latter did not take the form of hard law.

12. With regard to the General Assembly, advisory opinions from the International Court of Justice could be very useful, especially regarding specific legal questions on the scope and application of self-determination, sovereignty over natural resources, restitution, reparation and the implications of those rights.

13. The Human Rights Council was currently addressing the matter of the right to peace and drafting a resolution on the issue. He emphasized that the legal basis of the right to peace had been established in Article 2.3 and 2.4 of the Charter. However, the right to peace did not have legal implications alone, but also ethical, historical and psychological implications.

14. **Mr. Golfyaev** (Russian Federation) said that his delegation agreed that advocates of self-determination were often discredited as radicals or separatists. It was important to recognize that recognition of the will of the people was often driven by political motivations. His delegation agreed with the Independent Expert that current and future conflicts linked to the issue of self-determination should be settled only by negotiation, in full compliance with the Charter of the United Nations and international law. As the right to a just international order was still not legally binding, his delegation wondered how the Independent Expert envisioned the further codification of development and the conceptual formulation of the right to development.

15. **Mr. de Zayas** (Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order) said that the normative framework of the right to development had already been laid down in the Declaration on the Right to Development, but also implicitly as one of the three pillars of the United Nations. With a degree of innovativeness, a number of other instruments could be used for development, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, and Agenda 21, as they all had development at their heart. While some critics said that many of those instruments were not legally binding and were only soft law, he argued that sometimes soft law was harder than hard law, especially when it carried the conviction and consensus of the international community. It was important to educate Governments, politicians and civil society on the advantages of the right to development as a conflict-prevention strategy. Much suffering could be spared if the international community helped people to advance. The forthcoming report of the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights would address many of the issues raised by the representative of the Russian Federation.

16. **Ms. Dandan** (Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity), introducing her report (A/69/366), said that the draft declaration on the right of peoples and individuals to international solidarity (A/HRC/23/45), which she had submitted to the Human Rights Council at its twenty-sixth session in June 2014, was a significant step in the evolution of international solidarity for a concrete right that would serve as a potent tool to address the structural causes of poverty, inequality and other global challenges that impeded the full exercise and enjoyment of all human rights. The right to international solidarity was a fundamental human right to be enjoyed by all on the basis of equality and non-discrimination. The draft declaration could therefore inform and strengthen the targets related to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals as they evolved within the post-2015 development agenda, providing a unique opportunity to close the gaps that persisted and to meet the most basic development needs of the poorest communities. While serving as a timely catalyst for the pursuit of those essential needs, the draft declaration also provided a framework against which international commitments could be nurtured and monitored. It anchored the next global development agenda in international solidarity, which stood at the heart of a more sustainable and equitable development.

17. There was a mutually reinforcing relationship between the proposed draft declaration and the post-2015 development agenda. At its core, the post-2015 development agenda was about international solidarity: States deciding and acting together as an international community, to ensure that benefits from development processes and outcomes were enjoyed by all. Although the proposed declaration on the right to international solidarity was still in draft form, she emphasized that the right to international solidarity was derived from the freedoms and entitlements already codified in international human rights treaties reflecting core civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, as well as the right to development and international labour standards, complemented by other responsibilities arising from voluntary commitments and decisions in the various relevant fields at the bilateral, multilateral, regional and international levels. In other words, the right to solidarity derived its applicability from the human rights obligations established by those international instruments and agreements.

18. Her report focused on three areas of concern relevant to the proposed sustainable development goals, when viewed through the lens of the draft declaration on international solidarity: overcoming inequality and ending poverty and discrimination; building effective, accountable institutions and peaceful societies; and international cooperation, strengthening implementation and revitalizing global partnerships. In accordance with a decision taken by the Human Rights Council in its resolution 26/6, she would hold regional consultation workshops in 2015

for the purpose of further refining the draft declaration on human rights and international solidarity.

19. **Mr. Bohoslavsky** (Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on full enjoyment of human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights), introducing his report (see A/69/273), said that he planned to focus on six thematic areas: preventive aspects of fiscal policy and debt management; good practices in dealing with debt crisis; debt disputes and bilateral investment treaties; lending to States engaged in gross human rights violations; impact of illicit financial flows on human rights; and human rights in the context of debt restructuring and debt relief. With regard to debt crisis, lessons should be learned from countries that had managed to deal with financial crises with limited negative human rights impacts on their population. Country visits would be helpful in that connection, and he looked forward to visiting Iceland in December 2014.

20. In March 2015, in his first report to the Human Rights Council, he would present preliminary reflections on the topic of how to prevent private or official financial assistance being provided to Governments and non-State actors that were committing gross human rights violations.

21. He welcomed the inclusion by the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals of a goal to reduce illicit financial flows and hoped that such a target would remain in the final post-2015 development framework. Vulture fund litigation had already complicated debt restructuring processes and undermined the ability of some indebted countries to combat extreme poverty and to realize economic and social rights.

22. A recent study stated that litigation by so-called commercial holdout creditors had dramatically increased. During the 1980s, only about 5 per cent of all debt restructurings had been accompanied by legal disputes; in 2010, that figure had risen to almost 50 per cent, with 34 out of 120 cases targeting highly indebted poor countries. If the approach established by recent United States court rulings prevailed, creditors would be much more reluctant to conclude debt restructuring agreements with sovereign debtors, making debt crises longer and harder to resolve, with less predictable outcomes. The Independent Expert and the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights had therefore expressed concerns to the Governments of Argentina and the United States and to the main litigating partner, NML Capital Limited.

23. The problems posed by debt restructuring processes should be addressed by an improved legal framework based on well-tested international principles, including better collective action clauses in bond agreements incorporating human rights principles, national legislation limiting the ability of vulture funds to litigate in each jurisdiction and a multilateral legal framework for an orderly and predictable restructuring of sovereign debt. Such a framework should be compatible with existing human rights norms and principles as enshrined in Human Rights Council resolution 27/30 on foreign debt and human rights.

24. **Mrs. Almeida Watanabe Patriota** (Brazil) asked whether the Independent Expert felt that he needed a separate mandate to deal with the specific issue of sovereign debt, which had the most pervasive effects in developing countries, including human rights violations, or whether it would be addressed as part of his mandate in connection with illicit financial flows.

25. **Mr. Fawundu** (Sierra Leone) said that, as a country emerging from over 10 years of barbaric civil war, Sierra Leone had very strong views on the issue of illicit financial flows. His delegation wondered what possible stringent measures the Independent Expert had planned to put in place to monitor illicit financial flows. As had been learned in Sierra Leone, civil wars were generally fuelled by dubious resources and illicit activities, including monies kept in surreptitious overseas accounts. His delegation asked for examples of measures to monitor some of those activities in countries where there had been flagrant violations of human rights.

26. **Ms. Wang** Yi (China) said that debt had always been a major impediment for developing countries' efforts to promote economic growth and achieve development goals, as its very existence undermined the enjoyment of various rights. While those countries had suffered under growing burdens of sovereign debt, the international financial crisis had made the issue of debt sustainability even more challenging. It was important to enhance international cooperation and to improve international debt relief mechanisms. It was especially important for developed countries to honour official development assistance and debt relief commitments.

27. China supported Human Rights Council resolution 27/30 on the effects of foreign debt and General Assembly resolution 68/304 on developing a multilateral legal framework for debt restructuring processes. The international community must work together to enhance regulation of the global financial sector to preclude any attempts by speculative capital at hindering the process of national sovereign debt restructuring. An effective and development-oriented international debt restructuring and settlement mechanism should be established as early as possible. International financial institutions must also increase their capital support, technical assistance and assistance for capacity-building. Initiatives for assistance and debt reduction must be based on respect for the ownership of recipient countries and be in alignment with their development strategies.

28. China had assisted developing countries to the best of its ability, providing debt relief to highly indebted poor countries and least developed countries, and granting preferential and interest-free loans to certain countries, with a view to their achieving sustainable economic and social development. China had extended an invitation to the Independent Expert in 2013 and would welcome his visit.

29. **Ms. Gandini** (Argentina) asked how the Independent Expert believed the work of his mandate could be enriched by the work of other special procedures mandate holders in the United Nations system.

30. **Mr. Bohoslavsky** (Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on full enjoyment of human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights) said that foreign debt was intrinsically related to development. It was true, as the delegation of Brazil had pointed out, that the question of illicit flows and development was addressed in a separate resolution, which contained concrete budgetary implications; that was not the case, however, with his general work on foreign debt and development.

31. He would submit his report on illicit funds on 8 December 2014, and could therefore only refer to its general conclusions. More transparency was needed in financial markets, in both countries of origin and countries of destination.

32. The potential for joint work between United Nations agencies was considerable, including the work already being done by the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council on debt restructuring.

33. **Mr. Addo** (Chair of the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises) said that the report of the Working Group focused on national action plans for the implementation of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. National action plans could be a particularly effective means of generating national debate on current protection gaps and concrete steps needed to better address business-related human rights impacts.

34. As acknowledged in Human Rights Council resolution 26/22, national action plans could be a tool for coordinated and coherent implementation of the Guiding Principles in a way that accommodated all three pillars of the Principles and involved all relevant governmental and non-governmental stakeholders. In addition, national action plans were sufficiently flexible to allow States to respond to the range of business and human rights challenges that they might face in diverse regulatory environments.

35. National action plans should not be seen as a one-off exercise, but as a continuous process subject to review. They should also outline what the Government would do in the future and not merely note the current status of implementation. Pleased that the number of State-developed national action plans was rapidly increasing, the Working Group further encouraged States' business enterprises and civil society to work together and share experiences and good practices to develop national action plans. The first five such plans had been launched in 2013 and 2014, and processes to develop plans were under way in more than 20 countries, including Colombia, Ghana, Jordan, Mauritius, Mexico, Portugal and Tanzania. National human rights institutions and civil society actors were also increasingly engaging in that area, building momentum for national action plans in several countries, including in the Philippines and South Africa, and offering support informed by the Guiding Principles.

36. In addition to the current report, the Working Group had also set up a dedicated web page on national action plans to track their development and enactment, and was actively working on a more technical guidance document for States on how to develop, implement and update a robust national action plan, which would be

presented at the United Nations Forum on Business and Human Rights in December 2014.

37. **Mr. Hjelde** (Norway) said that his delegation agreed with the Working Group on the key importance of national action plans, but maintained that much remained to be done with regard to the implementation of the Guiding Principles. Although the Guiding Principles had become a normative global standard, it was still a challenge to mainstream human rights due diligence as an integral part of business practices. His delegation asked how it would be possible to reach out to and motivate those business enterprises that were still not familiar with the Guiding Principles.

38. **Mr. Miller** (United States of America) said that the United States had announced the development of its national action plan on responsible business conduct in September 2014. States that failed to comply with international human rights law created less conducive environments for businesses to respect human rights. It was important for the United States to promote respect for human rights through laws, policies and actions, with the goal of protecting individuals from misconduct by State and non-State actors, including business enterprises. It was a moral and political imperative for States to engage in good governance, including by addressing the abuse of private actors. His delegation asked how States could better fulfil their duty to protect individuals from the misconduct of non-State actors, especially business enterprises.

39. **Ms. Schmidt** (Switzerland) said that national action plans must be transparent and predictable, rely on coordinated participation, be based on the analysis of existing practices and gaps, and provide for the participation of all non-governmental actors. The Guiding Principles were the frame of reference for development and for the coordinated and inclusive implementation of essential measures to prevent human rights violations in business activities and ensure that victims had immediate access to effective recourse. In that regard, her delegation wondered how the Working Group planned to cooperate with States to help eliminate obstacles to effective recourse.

40. **Ms. Tschampa** (Observer for the European Union) said that it was important for all sectors of society to be actively involved in national action plans, including relevant ministries, industry, commerce, academia, human rights institutions and non-governmental organizations. Her delegation asked how an award system of public procurement, used as a tool to incentivize businesses to participate in the creation and implementation of national action plans, could ensure that competition remained fair, open, and transparent. Switzerland would appreciate hearing the views of the Working Group on how to ensure proper oversight of compliance by transnational corporations with national plan regulations, in both their home countries and the countries where they operated, as well as how to overcome the challenge of regulatory discrepancies between countries. As the report had mentioned, Governments could either develop national action plans as stand-alone documents, or include human rights chapters in broader strategies. Her delegation wondered what were the advantages, disadvantages and risks of both options.

41. **Mr. Holtz** (United Kingdom) said that his delegation welcomed the positive outcome of the recent United Nations African Forum and the joint statement made by the European Union and the African Union embodying their shared commitment to implementing the Guiding Principles in both regions. It was encouraging that more countries were developing national action plans, as the framework and multi-stakeholder approach of the Guiding Principles was the most effective mechanism to promote responsible business conduct and corporate respect for human rights.

42. His delegation was interested to hear about steps taken by the Committee or others to encourage private sector businesses to engage further with the business and human rights agenda, including within the United Nations system. His delegation also asked what resources and guidance were available to help countries develop their national action plans and how such information was disseminated.

43. **Mr. Mamabolo** (South Africa) said that two resolutions on transnational cooperation had been adopted at the twenty-sixth session of the Human Rights Council, one presented by Norway and the other by Ecuador and South Africa. His delegation asked for advice from the Chair of the Working Group on how to ensure that the resolutions were aligned and that they supported the long-term objective of elaborating a legally binding instrument.

44. With regard to the September 2014 African Regional Forum on Business and Human Rights held in Addis Ababa, his delegation asked what steps were

being taken to address the capacity problem facing African countries in the development of national action plans. His delegation also asked to hear more regarding the status of the development of national action plans in other regions, given that the relevant resolution had been adopted in 2011.

45. **Mr. Addo** (Chair of the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises) said that reaching out to businesses to disseminate the value of the Guiding Principles had been an important priority for him from the outset. The Working Group had established good connections with individual businesses, hoping to use the latter as catalysts and leaders, as companies were more likely to listen to each other than to anyone else. Many forums, such as the African Regional Forum, had businesses participate, and the Working Group had a policy of having a business representative on every forum panel to share their expertise. National action plans were also an excellent opportunity to bring businesses involved into compliance with the Guiding Principles, in a grass-roots rather than top-down approach.

46. The Working Group welcomed the new national action plan developed by the United States. With regard to encouraging non-State actors, including businesses, to respect human rights the second pillar of the Guiding Principles was a structured strategy to obtain compliance.

47. The Working Group was working with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and had launched a report on identifying obstacles to judicial remedy and how to address them, including by using prosecutorial cooperation as a first step. More radical recommendations, including revisiting the very concepts of corporate entity, separate personality and corporate jurisdiction, were possible, but as of yet remained limited to the academic sphere.

48. From the point of view of the Working Group, States controlled procurement and as such should consider standards of compliance that were similar to, if not higher than, the human rights standards that they themselves respected. Businesses were primarily interested in a fair and level playing field; in designing procurement policies, States should therefore adopt a fair and equitable system. In that regard, the European Union, the African Union and other regional institutions had a strong role to play in adopting a common standard with a compelling legal force that would be an effective way to obtain fair and equitable procurement incentivization with few differences across countries.

49. Many countries possessed mechanisms within their national action plans to ensure oversight and compliance, often with a requirement for businesses to report on their overall international activities. National action plans in general were excellent opportunities to begin to share good practices regarding business respect for human rights. Civil society (including advocates, non-governmental organizations, and national human rights institutions) must always be allowed to share their expertise and evidence of corporate practices at home and abroad, which should in turn be acted upon by national authorities to ensure good oversight and compliance. It made a lot of sense to allow companies and business associations to set up mechanisms to ensure compliance with human rights.

50. The disadvantage of developing a stand-alone national action plan was the slightly heavier cost of financial and human resources, which posed a challenge to some national authorities. However, the great advantage was that in order to develop a stand-alone national action plan, it was necessary to undertake an effective mapping of the landscape, which would produce a comprehensive and thorough understanding of what ground had already been covered and what still needed to be addressed. On the contrary, if a national action plan was integrated into an existing national strategy, it was likely to have a more comprehensive approach, but then risked being overwhelmed by other aspects of the strategy. Regardless of the path ultimately chosen by countries, it was helpful to be aware of the advantages and disadvantages of both solutions.

51. He congratulated the United Kingdom for having developed the very first national action plan and providing many valuable lessons. With regard to the resources available to help countries develop their own national action plans, he referred to the guidance document that would be issued by the Working Group in December 2014. In the meantime, certain civil society groups such as the International Corporate Accountability Roundtable and the Danish Institute for Human Rights had provided guidance, the latter by developing a toolkit on how to implement national action plans. Likewise, academic writings on the development of national action plans were a valuable

resource. The Working Group had itself launched a web page dedicated to national action plans, which not only collected links to existing plans but also provided the thoughts of the Working Group on each of them.

52. The Working Group believed that both of the resolutions on transnational cooperation adopted at the twenty-sixth session of the Human Rights Council were intended to strengthen respect for human rights in the business field and were as such intimately reconcilable. The Working Group had been given tasks and responsibilities in both documents and would serve as the link between the two.

53. The question of how to advance the capacity of African countries was a timely one, and it had formed the basis for conducting the African Regional Forum on business and human rights that had taken place in September 2014. Since the conference, a collaborative arrangement with the Centre for Applied Legal Studies and Singapore Management University had been set up to assess capacity needs in the African region. Some capacity-development initiatives had been established by specialized organizations, and the International Corporate Accountability Roundtable had launched capacity-building programmes for Mozambique, South Africa and Tanzania.

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.